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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DJIBOUTI 001121

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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI OPPOSITION RENOUNCES 2001 PEACE  
ACCORD

1. (U) SUMMARY: The Peace Accord (PA), signed between the FRUD Armee and the government on March 12th, 2001, is a growing subject of animosity between the opposition and government. The FRUD Armee was the breakaway faction of the Front for Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) that continued fighting against the Government after the first Peace Accord was signed with the FRUD's political leaders in 1994 to end Djibouti's civil war. The opposition coalition Union for Democratic Alternance (UAD) is criticizing the government for not respecting that Accord and for ignoring its articles pertaining to democratic reform. Press releases by the Republican Alliance for Democracy (ARD), the leading Afar party in the opposition coalition, is threatening to take up arms once again if the conditions for democratic reform set forth in the 2001 Peace Accord are not implemented. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Four years and four months after the signature of the Peace Accord in May 2001, and one year after the death of its leader - the late Ahmed Dini, ARD undertook a referendum among its members September 21st to determine future political actions by the party. During its meetings, ARD decided to renounce the Peace Accords, claiming unlimited violations by the regime. This peace accord followed the signature of the first peace treaty with the Afar rebellion in December 1994. At that time, a breakaway faction of FRUD headed by Ahmed Dini decided that fighting against the Government should continue. In February 2000, President Guelleh's Chief of Cabinet, Ali Guelleh, and the President of FRUD Armee, Ahmed Dini, signed the Reform and Civil Peace Accord in Paris, ending a decade-long civil war in Djibouti. The peace process, begun in 2000, ended with the signing of an exhaustive accord on May 12th, 2001 presided over by President Ismail Omar Guelleh in the presence of the international community.

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Peace and Security  
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3. (U) The 2001 Peace Accord is divided into four chapters: Peace & Security, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, Democratic Reforms, and Decentralization. The ethnic representation of all communities in the defense, security and police forces was the major issue of conflict between the two parties during negotiations. Prisoner exchange, cease-fire, demining, and a dialogue were established at the opening of negotiations. It was agreed that government forces would return to a peace time position and that elements of FRUD Armee would be demobilized and integrated into defense and security corps or reintegrated into civil society. During the civil war, sympathizers of FRUD were fired from their jobs. The accord stated that every civil servant discriminated against on the basis of his or her membership in FRUD should be reintegrated into the workforce.

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Rehabilitation and Reconstruction  
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4. (U) During the negotiations, a rehabilitation program was discussed and agreed upon. The Peace Accord stipulates the government must rehabilitate building and road infrastructure, water adduction and housing construction in Yoboki and Obock. Parallel to these programs, the Port of Obock would also be reorganized. Water adduction to the Day region "must be finished as soon as possible." The government completed the water adduction in the beginning of 2004. Some among the opposition hold that this chapter was

not given significant respect and importance by the Government. The war zones such as Obock and Yoboki have not seen significant development and the movement of population that fled the war began to return only recently. Obock is the least developed district among the six districts of Djibouti. ARD calls for a fair distribution of wealth and asks the Government not to concentrate resources solely in the capital. The Afar opposition is mainly from Obock.

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Democratic Reforms  
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15. (U) Among democratic reforms, the opposition considered the Constitutional Council, installing a multiparty system, and public and press liberties as key engagements from the Government to accelerate steps toward democracy. The Afar opposition demanded the composition of the Constitutional Council be reexamined to reflect the cultural composition of the country. "The FRUD-Armee will be tolerated as a political party until the constitutional limitation of four parties is lifted in September 2002," says the clause on multiparty system. The two parties agreed on respecting public and international standards for press liberties. The local media has been always qualified as pro-government and that it didn't reflect the political diversity of the national scene.

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Decentralization  
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16. (U) The government and the FRUD-Armee agreed on general objectives of decentralization. Political, administrative and economical decentralizations would reduce regional disparities. The two sides agreed that two levels of decentralization were needed: regional and community. Regional governing bodies should be created first and then communities. Five regions were created, Ali-Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil, Obock and Tadjourah. It was agreed that the capital should have a special status. A National Commission of Decentralization was to be created; composed of twelve members among whom three representatives of each party that was a signatory to the Accord. The Commission is entitled to activate the decentralization process, follow regional institutions and participate in defining legislative texts for decentralization.

17. (U) Some clauses have been respected and implemented by the government; others have yet to be implemented. Observers agree that articles pertaining to security forces and the reintegration of the FRUD-Armee members have been implemented satisfactorily. On the other hand, rehabilitation and war zones reconstruction efforts achieved limited results. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Djibouti financed the reconstruction of 100 houses in Obock, but the opposition criticized the houses as providing little livable space. The most controversial points remain democratic reforms and decentralization. The Peace Accord provides for the examination of composition of the Constitutional Council. The FRUD-Armee, which became ARD, wanted the Constitutional Council to be representative of all political leanings, which the government has not guaranteed. Regarding decentralization, the two parties agreed to put in place first regional governing bodies and then community governing bodies. The Peace Accord created a National Commission for Decentralization (NCD) composed of twelve members among whom three representatives of each party were signatories to the Accord. The tasks of the NCD are to put in place decentralization, to monitor regional institutions and to participate in drafting of legal texts. The Peace Accord is consolidating the "checks and balances" system within the government. The FRUD-Armee has tried to manage the decentralization process with the central administration, something that the Government never previously allowed.

18. (U) On September 24th, 2005, the ARD renounced the Peace Accord in a press release. The opposition party claims the government is aggravating the original roots of the conflict by not issuing Identity Cards equally to all citizens, making inefficient democratic reforms, and distorting the decentralization process in an unacceptable way. It also criticized the

government for not applying and implementing the articles in the Peace Accord honestly. In response to this frustration, the opposition coalition is likely to boycott regional elections planned for the end of the year as it did with Presidential election in April 2005.

RAGSDALE